

CALFED OPERATIONS COORDINATION GROUP
MEETING NOTES AND ACTION ITEMS
January 29, 2003

Announcements

The next meeting is scheduled for February 19, 2003.

Review of December 18 meeting notes

Any comments are to be sent to Tracy Pettit.

Handouts

- 1) Update on Winter-Run Chinook Salmon, Spring-Run Chinook and Central Valley Steelhead, dated January 29, 2003; Bruce Oppenheim, NMFS, and Jim White, CDFG.
- 2) News Release "Draft Revised (b)(2) Decision Comment Period Closes Monday, February 3, 2003", U. S. Department of the Interior, dated December 18, 2002; Chet Bowling, USBR
- 3) DRAFT (b)(2) Accounting, Water Year 2003 – 90%, dated January 29, 2003; R. Guinee, USF&WS, and Paul Fujitani, USBR.
- 4) CALFED OPS GROUP Operations Briefing, dated January 29, 2003; Curtis Creel, DWR.

SWRCB Activities

Update on SWRCB activities

- The SWRCB will hold a hearing regarding non-compliance with Term 91 by three water right holders in the southern Delta. At issue is whether the water right holders have any basis of right during the curtailment period. The hearing will take place February 25 and 26. Evidence regarding Term 91 was submitted on January 24, 2003.
- The hearing regarding the petitions of the San Joaquin River Group Authority agencies for change in purpose and place of use to support the VAMP has been rescheduled for April 23 and 24. Approval of the petition would allow the SJRGA parties to supply an additional 46 thousand acre-feet of water under the San Joaquin River Agreement when conditions warrant. The hearing is needed to resolve objections raised by the South Delta Water Agency and the Central Delta Water Agency.
- The SWRCB will hold an informational workshop in early June on the Narrative Salmon Doubling Objective. The purpose of the workshop will receive input from the resource agencies and other interested parties on progress toward meeting this objective.
- Absent a letter from the DWR or the USBR requesting a resumption of the Bay-Delta water Rights Hearing, Phase 8 will be dismissed on January 31. It cannot be extended. An extension would require a Board order (which requires a 10-day notice). A separate hearing will be held if it is reintroduced. A reinitiation will require CEQA, environmental documentation and would reset the calendar. Decision 1641 was the final decision. Flow conditions 1 and 2 assigned temporary responsibility. Now it will be permanent.
- The SWRCB is awaiting the Fish Protection and the Water Quality Response Plans.
- The Division of Water Rights received a petition from a group of Sacramento River water diverters requesting the short-term transfer of 80,710 acre-feet of water to Metropolitan Water District and potentially other water users located in the Central Valley. The proposed transfer will be based on a combination crop fallowing, crop shifting and groundwater. The petition notice was posted on the website on January 21. Comments on the proposed transfer are due on February 18.

On-Going Activities Related to the Ops Group

Status of Response Plans

There are three Response Plans needed to do Joint Point of Diversion that the SWRCB needs (which are based upon current operations, and not on the 8500 cfs capacity).

- Water Level Response Plan – which expires on June 6, 2003. It was initiated to protect the south Delta diverters in the long term.
- Water Quality Response Plan – The Project Agencies need to work with Contra Costa Water District. It was initiated to protect diverters in the central and southern Delta in the long term.
- Fishery Protection Plan - The Management and Project Agencies are working on it.

The SWRCB may take up to 30 days for review of these plans. The Water Level and Water Quality Response Plans are baseline plans (Stage 1). The Fish Protection Plan is required for stage 2. Any action for fish in which there isn't an increase in net pumping falls under Stage 1.

Status of Smelt

The Recovery Abundance Criteria was met three out of five times and it never fell below 84. However, it has barely been met for the last two years. The Fall Midwater Trawl takes all four months. 2002 was the fifth lowest year. The next step is to develop management plans and provide some future protection for smelt. The data need to be graphed for delisting purposes. It is unknown when a five-year review can be done which was requested by USFWS and required by the ESA.

Status of DOI's (B)(2) Policy

The comment period closes on February 3, 2003. A workshop was held at an earlier date. There was no change in the (B)(2) accounting year between the 1999 decision and the proposed decision.

Fishery Status

Status of Sacramento River Monitoring

There is an array of screw traps in the upper Sacramento River at GCID, Knights Landing and Red Bluff Diversion Dam. The juvenile salmon count was 404 frye which included Fall-run and Spring-run sized Chinook salmon at the end of the year. The movement of the fish to the Delta has subsided. The Winter-run sized Chinook salmon are in the Sacramento River and in Delta. The older winter-run sized Chinook salmon, including yearlings, are ready to emigrate.

Steelhead, Winter-Run and Spring-Run Chinook Salmon

The number of adults in the Fish and Game winter-run carcass survey was 7,337 adult fish. This number is greater by 200 compared to the number in 2001. However, the number is still lower than the

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estimate from the Red Bluff Diversion Dam count. The female count in the 2002 carcass survey was higher than the 2001 survey and the Red Bluff Diversion Dam numbers. The take limit at the pumps needs to be determined. The take at the pumps was 2,600 with lower numbers for older juveniles. It was estimated that the group in March would not exceed the red light. The Livingston Hatchery CWT releases will be made on January 30, 2003. The number to be released will be 230,000 compared to 250,000 last year.

The take limit for the Spring-run sized Chinook salmon surpassed a one percent loss on January 10th, 2003 (based upon the CWT of Late Fall-run sized Chinook salmon released at Battle Creek which represents the wild fish (which is the surrogate group)). The EWA incurred a debt of 122 TAF in order to minimize the loss of salmon and smelt. DWR and the Bureau requested re-initiation of consultation for going above the two percent (take limit).

The Late Fall-run sized Chinook salmon come in January and spawn right away. The Spring-run sized Chinook Salmon come in between April and May and go to the upper tributaries to spawn around August.

Steelhead is the focus of Central Valley-wide programs. There were 15 redds in the survey for the first year in the Feather River. Baseline monitoring is the basic for determining trends. The USBR received a grant to do work with the Department of Fish and Game during the January – March steelhead season. DWR is performing preliminary redd monitoring. The USFWS is working on Clear Creek.

In the Stanislaus River, a weir will be installed in a sandy location to monitor salmon. NMFS requested to continue through winter. The steelhead will be monitored from the dam and within five miles downstream.

Splittail

Nothing to report in this section.

Delta Smelt

Export curtailments were taken when the 14-day average was exceeded. The 14-day average is now around 250. The Spring Kodiak Trawl in February will help with the adult smelt count.

Work Group Activities

OFF Update

A letter is being drafted with (B)(2) comments. The deadline for review is COB January 30th, 2003. Finalized comments will be sent.

DAT Update

The calls are either weekly or on a need-to-need basis.

Operations Status

CVP/SWP Operations Status and Delta Operations Criteria

Excess conditions in the Delta have been declared since mid-December. The flows are decreasing due to drier than average conditions for January. The outlook for the water supply is starting to look like last year. The SWP is exporting 6680 plus one third of Vernalis (around 7,300 cfs). The flow in the Feather River is at 1,250 cfs (minimum release). The actual SWP storage in San Luis Reservoir is 540 TAF. In the base case, it would be around 650 TAF. Orville has to be at 2.8 MAF in order for the flood control requirements to be activated. The Southern reservoirs are 20-25 TAF below being full.

A discussion followed regarding dissolved oxygen issues and whether it affects fish and other aquatic life in the Stockton Deepwater Ship Channel and its flow into Delta channels. The barriers are a concern for the RWQCB, but the fisheries do not seem to be worried.

The requirement at Roe Island (Port Chicago) was triggered for February. The number of days to meet this requirement is about 25 days in February. The E/I ratio is thirty five percent. The SWP's allocation is at 45%.

If San Luis Reservoir physically fills, then all the EWA debt is expunged. If the total demand and Article 21 amounts are less than the amount of water available from excess condition, then the EWA will "spill" debt. If the total demand and Article 21 amounts are greater than the amount of water available from excess condition, then the EWA will not reduce its debt.

The SWP and CVP is showing full pumping in July and August, however, on page 4 of the CALFED Group Operations Briefing package, it is showing the CVP storage in San Luis Reservoir as too low.

Storage levels in Shasta and Folsom reservoirs are encroaching into the flood control pool. Releases at Keswick and Folsom are at 10,000 cfs and 4,000 cfs, respectively. Tracy Pumping Plant is at full bore (around 4,300 cfs). The CVP portion of San Luis Reservoir is projected to fill mid-February. There is an unknown amount of pulse flow on the Stanislaus River at Oakdale.

2003 Operations Plan

The CVP in both the 90% and 50% hydrology studies are capacity constrained. The water year types for the 90% and 50% hydrologies are below and above normal, respectively. In the CVP study, Joint Point Of Diversion is not included since the SWP does not have any capacity, San Luis Reservoir is utilized to the full extent, and the storage in the CVP share is drawn more. The CVP and SWP studies are showing different low points.

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(B)(2) Accounting Update

The draft (B)(2) accounting sheet was distributed. In the 90% hydrology, the requirement at Roe Island was not triggered which could increase the WQCP costs.

EWA Operations

A discussion followed regarding EWA operations.

Action Items

None.